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SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-07 SY-05 SYE-00 DCT-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6823
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS
AMEMBASSY LIMA

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7589

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EO 12065: GDS 9/19/86 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY: SEPTEMBER '6-19, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 7249

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY NOW REGISTERS 11 DIS-
APPEARANCES THROUGH AUGUST. AN UMBER OF COMMUNIST YOUTH WERE
JAILED. CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY. JEWISH
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SOMEWHAT MORE RELAXED. SUPREME COURT
DECISION FAVORS JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. PERONISTS BRIEFLY JAILED.

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END SUMMARY.

2. (U) DISAPPEARANCES. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT DECLARED THAT 11 PEOPLE HAVE DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND AUGUST 26 1980. AMONG THESE REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES ARE THOSE OF MARTIN HERVACIO GAUDEUX WHOSE WIFE WAS DETAINED LATE LAST MONTH ON CHARGES THAT SHE WAS A MONTONERO. ALSO DISAPPEARING IN AUGUST WERE TWO PARAGUAYAN COMMUNISTS, ANTONIO MAIDANA (FIRST SECRETARY OF THE PARAGUAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY) AND EMILIO ROA (ALSO A PARAGUAYAN COMMUNIST). THESE DISAPPEARANCES WERE FIRST DENOUNCED BY THE PARAGUAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH IS HEADQUARTERED IN ARGENTINA. ROA HAD REPORTEDLY LIVED IN ARGENTINA FOR OVER 20 YEARS AND MAIDANA WAS RECENTLY RELEASED AFTER SERVING A LONG PRISON SENTENCE IN PARAGUAY.

3. [REDACTED] AMONG THOSE PUBLICLY PROTESTING THE DETENTION OF THE TWO PARAGUAYANS WERE OVER A DOZEN ARGENTINE POLITICIANS OF THE CENTER LEFT AND LEFT. THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS WHO DISAPPEARED PROVOKED A PUBLIC RESPONSE FROM FEDERAL POLICE CHIEF, GENERAL JUAN SASIAIN. SASIAIN DID NOT DENY THAT THE PARAGUAYANS HAD DISAPPEARED. INSTEAD HIS COMPLAINT WAS THAT THE POLITICIANS HAD RESPONDED TO COMMUNIST INITIATIVE FOR A DECLARATION ON BEHALF OF THE TWO DISAPPEARED. THE ALLEGATION THAT THE TWO PARAGUAYANS DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA IS A VERY SERIOUS ONE. AT THIS POINT WE HAVE NO WAY OF CONFIRMING THE CHARGES BUT FIND IT SIGNIFICANT THAT SASIAIN DID NOT DENY THEM.

4. (U) COMMUNIST YOUTH ROUNDED UP. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY HAS ALSO PROTESTED THE ARREST OF 16 YOUNG PEOPLE. TWELVE OF THESE WERE DETAINED IN BUENOS AIRES AND TWO IN MENDOZA. WE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT ALL THOSE ROUNDED UP WERE MEMBERS OF THE [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF THE ARGENTINE COMMUNIST PARTY.

5. [REDACTED] THE ARGENTINE COMMUNIST PARTY IS THE ONLY MARXIST PARTY IN ARGENTINA THAT HAS NOT BEEN BANNED. INSTEAD, LIKE ALL PARTIES TO ITS RIGHT, IT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. THE PARTY ITSELF IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST SUPPORTIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ANY PARTY ON THE LEFT. UNTIL LAST MONTH WE HAD NO REPORTS OF ITS MEMBERS BEING ARRESTED. LAST MONTH, HOWEVER, ONE MEMBER OF THE PARTY'S YOUTH ORGANIZATION WAS DETAINED. SOME MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE LONG BEEN UNCOMFORTABLE WITH A SITUATION IN WHICH AN OSTENSIBLY ANTI-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT TOLERATED COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES.

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6. (U) CHANGES AT THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY: CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY WERE INSTITUTED EARLIER THIS MONTH. OSTENSIBLY THESE CHANGES ARE DESIGNED TO MAKE THE ORGANIZATION MORE EFFECTIVE. HOWEVER, ONE HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCE TELLS US THAT THE REAL PURPOSE WAS TO CUT BACK THE ROLE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARGENTINE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSEMBLY, REPLACING PARTY MEMBERS WITH NON-PARTY MEMBERS.

7. [REDACTED] COMMUNISTS HAVE NEVER CONTROLLED THE ASSEMBLY. THEIR INFLUENCE THERE HAS POTENTIALLY BEEN SUBSTANTIAL. HOWEVER, THE ASSEMBLY REMAINED IN THE CONTROL OF NON- AND ANTI-COMMUNISTS. SOME ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WERE DISTURBED, HOWEVER, BY WHAT THEY FELT WAS THE COMMUNIST EFFORT TO RESTRAIN ASSEMBLY SALLIES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, AND THIS GROUP IS PARTICULARLY SATISFIED WITH THE MODIFICATIONS.

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8. [REDACTED] DETAINEES. WE HAVE MADE ANOTHER EFFORT TO GET AN ACCURATE FIX ON THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN ARGENTINA JAILS ON OTHER THAN COMMON CRIMINAL CHARGES. AS A RESULT WE BELIEVE WE CAN LOWER OUR LAST ESTIMATE OF 2,000 TO BETWEEN 1,600 AND 1,800. THE LOWER FIGURE IS BASED ON INFORMATION FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES WHO CONTINUE TO GUARD THIS INFORMATION CLOSELY AND WILL NOT GO INTO GREATER DETAILS. THE HIGHER FIGURE IS BASED ON INFORMATION FROM A NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCE WHO KEEPS VERY ACCURATE TRACK OF THESE NUMBERS. INTERESTINGLY THERE IS AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL AND [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES THAT THERE ARE NOW ABOUT 700 TO 750 PRISONERS BEING HELD UNDER PEN WITHOUT TRIAL AND WITHOUT SENTENCE. TOTAL PEN PRISONERS INCLUDING THOSE SERVING SENTENCES ARE NOT JUST A BIT OVER 1,200. THE BALANCE OF DETAINEES IS COMPOSED OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SENTENCED BY MILITARY OR CIVILIAN COURTS, NUMBERING IN TOTAL ABOUT 500.

9. [REDACTED] WE UNDERSTAND FROM GOVERNMENT AND OTHER SOURCES THAT THE GOA IS STILL AT WORK TRYING TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEN PRISONERS WITHOUT CHARGE OR SENTENCE TO BETWEEN 300 AND 400 BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

10. [REDACTED] ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISAPPEARED. JORGE LUIS BORGES, ARGENTINA'S LEADING MAN OF LETTERS, AND RICARDO BALBIN, THE LEADER OF THE ARGENTINE RADICAL PARTY, TOOK DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE POSITIONS ON ACCOUNTING FOR THE MANY THOUSANDS WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED. BORGES SAID IN ROME THAT "IF THERE WERE CRIMES IT IS NECESSARY TO INVESTIGATE THEM...NOBODY DENIES CRIMES." BALBIN SPEAKING TO A GROUP OF RADICALS IN SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO SAID THAT THE DISAPPEARED "ARE DEAD" AND THE TIME HAD COME FOR ARGENTINA TO "FORGET" THE PAST. THE DISAPPEARED, HE SAID, WERE THE PRICE OF THE "DIRTY WAR".

11. [REDACTED] COMMENT: BALBIN'S POSITION ON ACCOUNTING FOR THE PAST WAS ESTABLISHED EARLIER THIS YEAR. HE OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES THAT THE BEST WAY TO GET THE MILITARY TO RELEASE THEIR HOLD ON THE GOVERNMENT IS TO ASSURE THEM THAT THERE WILL BE NO NUREMBERG WHEN THE CIVILIANS TAKE OVER. THE MILITARY'S CONTINUING SENSITIVITY ON THIS ISSUE IS UNDENIABLE. OTHER POLITICIANS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENT BET THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE THE MILITARY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM POWER WITH A COMMITMENT BY CIVILIAN POLITICIANS NOT TO PURSUE THE MILITARY FOR ACTS COMMITTED DURING THE "DIRTY WAR." BORGES ON THE OTHER HAND HAS NOT JOINED THOSE IN ARGENTINA WHO ON MORAL

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GROUNDS DEMAND AN ACCOUNTING. IN OUR JUDGEMENT THEY REMAIN THE
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MINORITY, A JUDGEMENT WHICH BALBIN, EVER THE POLITICIAN, WOULD SEEM TO SHARE.

12. [REDACTED] ANTI-SEMITISM. CONCERNS IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CAUSED BY LAST MONTH'S ATTACKS ON JEWISH SCHOOLS AND SYNAGOGUES SEEM TO HAVE SUBSIDED SOMEWHAT. THE ATTACKS THEMSELVES HAVE CEASED. COMMUNITY LEADERS ARE PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA SENT THEM A WARM NOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS. VIDELA'S LETTER WAS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IT CLEARLY ACCEPTED ARGENTINE JEWS AS FULL MEMBERS OF THE ARGENTINE NATION. IN THE PAST THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL LETTER HAD CARRIED AT LEAST THE INFERENCE THAT JEWS WERE A GROUP APART.

13. (U) JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. THE SUPREME COURT DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL A DECISION BY THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT BANNING THE CHILDREN OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES FROM PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS. PRESUMABLY THE NEW RULING WILL LEAD TO THE RETURN OF THE CHILDREN TO THEIR CLASSES.

14. (U) PERONISTS JAILED. POLICE IN THE PROVINCE OF CATAMARCA ROUNDED UP SOME 100 PERONISTS WHO WERE ATTENDING A PARTY-SPONSORED DINNER. THE ROUNDUP WAS BASED ON THE CURRENT PROHIBITION ON POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. AMONG THOSE SEIZED WAS THE SON OF LEFTIST PERONIST VICENTE SAADI. ALL DETAINEES WERE RELEASED WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

15. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE POLITICAL RALLY WITH MEAL IS PRETTY STANDARD PRACTICE WITHIN ARGENTINA TODAY. GIVEN THE RELAXED STANDARDS FOR ENFORCING THE GOVERNMENT'S BAN ON POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, THOSE ARRESTED CONSTITUTE AN EXCEPTION RATHER THAN A RULE.
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